DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 431 CG 031 167

AUTHOR Allen, Jackie M.
TITLE Addressing Fragmentation: Building Integrated Services for Student Support.
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 10p.; In its: Assessment: Issues and Challenges for the Millennium; see CG 031 161.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cooperation; *Counselor Role; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Integrated Services; Needs Assessment; Strategic Planning; *Student Personnel Services
IDENTIFIERS Paradigm Shifts; Support Systems

ABSTRACT

The concept of integrated service delivery has been endorsed by the professional organizations of all student support services personnel. Still, this paradigm has been slow to be adopted in schools. For one, counseling professionals are hesitant to share their role with other professionals. Services are often fragmented and professionals are unsure what each other's role is with the students. Funding is distributed unevenly across programs. The creation of a collaborative work culture where professionals spend time together doing strategic program planning enhances the change process. Beginning with a needs assessment of the school climate and community will assure that members of the planning team know the strengths and weaknesses of the existing services. Translating the needs into a plan of action for short- and long-term goals is the next step. The school community needs to be aware of the programmatic changes and a successful public relations campaign will lead to successful changes in the services paradigm. (Contains 13 references.) (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 457 431

Addressing Fragmentation: Building Integrated Services for Student Support

By
Jackie M. Allen

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy.

CG031167

Chapter Seven

Addressing Fragmentation: Building Integrated Services for Student Support

Jackie M. Allen

Abstract

The concept of integrated service delivery has been endorsed by the professional organizations of all student support services personnel. Yet this paradigm has been slow to be adopted in schools. Barriers to implementation are discussed, along with potential solutions to those barriers. Finally, the process by which a school or district might move toward integrated service delivery is outlined.

With higher benchmarks for student achievement, more required assessment, and increased demand for accountability, pupil personnel programs and services are often cut when budgets are trimmed. Yet, more money may be only part of the answer to improving programs and services. Fragmentation in services for children and youth and the lack of collaboration to develop effective service models may be as large a barrier as the lack of funds. The print component of a two-hour teleconference, Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole, was devoted to addressing the fragmentation in services for children and youth. In this document the need for coordination and collaboration was described: "The current system of fragmented services for youth has reached the limit of its effectiveness, and even at its peak, such a system fails to meet the complex needs of today's youth" (Palaich, Whitney, & Paolino, 1991, p. v).

Integrated services—that is, programs based on a collaborative model provided by credentialed pupil personnel professionals—are not a new concept. In 1994 the theme of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) annual conference was "School Counselors Collaborating for Student Success." The first ASCA Presidential Theme Digest developed from this conference outlined the impending educational issues; characteristics, requirements, and benefits of

collaboration; and the collaborative role of the school counselor in educational reform. In 1996, a statement in the Mental Health in Schools Center newsletter summarized the need for collaboration and the lack of response by professionals to this need: "In both policy and practice, it is evident that developing a comprehensive, integrated approach is a low priority" (p. 2). Implicit in California's comprehensive school health model is the necessity for collaborative efforts in order to have a coordinated school health program in a local school (California Department of Education, 2000).

The National Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations (NAPSO), a coalition of national professional organizations whose members provide a variety of student support services and programs, endorses a collaborative approach to the delivery of services and programs to meet the complex needs of the nation's youth. In 1994 the California Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations adopted a position statement, School-Linked, School-Based Integrated Services, which embraced the collaborative model of school-based, school-linked integrated service delivery and asserted its essential role in meeting the increasingly complex needs of California's children and their families. In *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice II* the National Association of School Psychologists advocates for the use of a collaborative/participatory model in mental health service and program delivery (Ysseldyke et al., 1997). School nurses and school social workers have also supported a shared agenda and integrated service delivery (Gibelman, 1993; National Association of School Nurses, n.d.).

Collaboration is widely recognized by national professional associations and pupil service organizations, is recommended by national studies on the delivery of youth services, and is a basic concept of the comprehensive school health model. Why is it such an extremely difficult concept to actualize at the local school level? Are we cheating our students by not providing collaborative, coordinated services? What role does the student support professional play in the coordination of student support programs and services?

Overcoming Barriers

Perhaps the place to start in addressing this problem is an overview of the barriers to team building that appear to exist in our schools. An initial concern is territoriality and turf issues. Each specialist or professional may perceive that another professional is taking over his or her role or unique responsibilities when, in fact, there is more than enough work to go around for everyone. If the primary concern of a student support program is the student, then the most important goal is to serve the student, and perhaps who provides the service is not as

important as the accomplishment of the goal. An effective student support program will increase, not decrease, the need for personnel.

Fragmented, categorical funding may lead to divisiveness among student support staff. For example, special education has a designated source of resources through state and federal funding and may be viewed as having program and job security. Such categorical funding is not adequate to meet the needs of all students, and limited resources become the much larger concern. Creative use of funding sources and the creation of new funding through special grants will improve student support programs. Collaborative legislative efforts, responsible assessment and accountability, and social marketing campaigns will increase visibility and financial support.

Student support professionals (counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses) are not always aware of the distinct roles of each member of an integrated services staff. Staff training, beginning in graduate education programs, is essential for specialists to obtain a viable perspective of the whole picture of support services. Through the Integrating Pupil Services Personnel Into Comprehensive School Health and HIV Prevention grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and with the administrative efforts of the Education Development Center, Inc., five national pupil services personnel organizations—the American School Counselor Association, National Association of School Nurses, National Association of School Psychologists, American Psychological Association, and National Association of Social Workers—collaborated to strengthen the roles of the professions they represent in comprehensive school health activities at local, state, and national levels. One of the major initial tasks of the grant was to develop a training model of integrated services to demonstrate how the various professions would work together on a school-site student study team to address the needs of students. In order to prepare the presentation, it was necessary to determine the shared roles and unique contributions each professional brought to the team. The effort of struggling with the common and unique roles of various disciplines provided each specialist with an understanding of both the whole picture and each professional's special contribution. Each specialist approaches student needs from a slightly different perspective—the nurse from a health perspective, the social worker from a family systems and ecological perspective, the psychologist from a learning theory and assessment approach, and the school counselor from an academic, social/personal, and career emphasis. Yet student support teams work together and share common roles in educational reform, program planning, crisis intervention and prevention, community support building, and assessment and referral from the perspective of whole-child development and with the ultimate

goal of school and community wellness.

Disjointed organizational structure may be a significant barrier to team building. In the school-district-level designation of coordination, supervision, and accountability, nurses are separated from counselors, counselors from psychologists, and social workers from other student support staff members. Therefore, it is very difficult to develop clear lines of communication and a coherent policy for pupil personnel services and programs. The support staff needs to communicate with each other not just at IEP meetings, but at times when they can plan a coordinated, comprehensive program to address student needs in the district and at the local school site. The concept of a comprehensive school health program is a model for uniting eight diverse components of school health under one umbrella. Most schools do not have the resources or personnel to implement all eight components in one comprehensive program. Uniting student support staff to work collaboratively in coordinated efforts to improve pupil service programs is a step we must take. Such an effort will provide the support students need to be healthy in mind and body, achieve academically, develop satisfying relationships, and prepare for responsible citizenship and the world of work.

Fear of change may impede team building in a district or at a local school site. Collaboration implies change: forming new service delivery models, looking at service delivery in new ways, seeking and adopting new paradigms, and challenging both oneself and the system. In a popular management book *Who Moved My Cheese?* Johnson (1998) reminds us through his parable that we all react to change in different ways but that those who "hem and haw," refusing to accept the challenges of change, may never find the cheese and may not be able to work effectively in the system. Breaking down the barrier of fear of the unknown is crucial for the change process.

Collaborative efforts will lay the groundwork for developing coherent policies and clear goals. An important collaborative effort in every school is the disaster plan, which specifies what, who, when, where, and how all personnel and students in the school should function in the event of a disaster. Since Columbine and other school tragedies, more attention has been given to a wide variety of possible crisis situations requiring the awareness, knowledge, and combined efforts of all staff to maintain student safety. Student support professionals need to make the development of prevention and intervention plans and programs a top priority for their collaborative efforts.

Developing Integrated Service Programs

Many benefits may be derived from collaboration. Student support

personnel, credentialed or certified school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses provide support services and programs for students in our nation's schools. Together student support professionals are able to create a united front in legislative, public relations, and program development. Understanding the issues of stakeholders, which may be an overwhelming task for one profession, becomes much easier with collaborative efforts. Coordinated efforts create increased visibility, reduce turf competition, and increase the amount and scope of services. Collaborative programs are more cost effective because integrated services staff share experiences, concerns, and ideas and thus increase their individual awareness and knowledge of what their colleagues do in their specialized jobs.

Envisioning the future is the beginning of change. At a local school site, student support professionals need to meet together, focus on the needs of their students, and develop a shared vision. The process of developing a shared vision is the first important step. This vision might be based on a comprehensive school health model (California Department of Education, 2000), the ASCA standards (Dahir, Sheldon, & Valiga, 1998), a comprehensive counseling and guidance model (Gysbers and Henderson, 2000), or a unique integrated services model created locally. Agonizing over turf issues, program design, diminishing resources, duplication or gaps in services, and the overwhelming demands of meeting student needs often builds dynamic relationships between student support personnel.

The creation of a collaborative work culture where professionals spend time together doing strategic program planning enhances the change process. The planning process must include all parties affected by student support services, including students, parents, administrators, teachers, all student support personnel, and representatives from the community. Employing diverse modalities such as singing, recreational activities, art, and drama in the planning process improves the development of a collaborative work culture and the possibility of designing an effective program plan. An impartial facilitator in the planning process may help to keep the lines of communication open, to assist in the definition of roles, and to promote creativity in decision making.

Beginning with a needs assessment of the school climate and community will assure that members of a planning team know the strengths and weaknesses of the existing services, what is important to school and community members, and the specific needs of students. Scanning for economic, political, and other external environmental indicators can help determine the major emphases to be included in the program. Using surveys and questionnaires, existing evaluations,

and both informal and formal feedback will clarify the challenges to be faced in the collaborative effort to make school better for kids.

Now the real work to solidify the vision into reality begins with translation of the needs into a plan of action. Short-term and long-term goals are determined based on the needs assessment. Strategies are developed to carry out the goals. Resources are analyzed and, when necessary, additional resources are sought. The roles of the student support personnel must be clarified, and an evaluation component should be built into the model.

Finally, support for the new integrated services model is sought and the stakeholders in the process begin a public relations campaign to announce the changes and gain support for the new model. It is advisable to institutionalize the changes made in the program or services model in order to guarantee permanent progress. The school community needs to be aware of the programmatic changes and the benefits to be gained by those changes. A successful public relations campaign will lead to a successful change in the program and services paradigm.

Student support personnel can be significant catalysts for collaboration and change at their schools by facilitating a culture of collaboration in student services and programs and by developing integrated services models that meet the needs of students and the school community. Fragmentation in children's and youth services will disappear when the stakeholders and service providers meet to discuss their community's needs and concerns. Barriers to team building can be surmounted and integrated service models developed. It is imperative that educators form partnerships with parents, staff, and community so they can bring together the necessary resources to support students in realizing academic self-esteem, academic achievement, and school-to-work readiness. A paradigm of change is possible. Collaboration is the key to moving student support programs into the twenty-first century and providing the quality of services our nation's youth deserve.

References and Resources

Allen, J. (1994). *School counselors collaborating for student success.* (ASCA Presidential Theme Digest). Greensboro, NC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EDO-CG-94-27)

California Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations. (1994). School-linked, school-based integrated services. (Position Statement). Unpublished.

California Department of Education (2000). *Building infrastructure for coordinated school health: California's blueprint.* Sacramento, CA: Author.

Dahir, C., Sheldon, C, and Valiga, M. (1998). *Vision into action: Implementing the national standards for school counseling programs.* Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association.

Gibelman, M. (1993). School social workers, counselors, and psychologists in collaboration: A shared agenda. *Social Work in Education 15*(1), 45–51.

Gysbers, N., & Henderson, P. (2000). *Developing and managing your school guidance program.* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Johnson, S. (1998). *Who moved my cheese?* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Marx, E., & Wooley, S. (1998). *Health is academic: A guide to coordinated school health programs.* New York: Teachers College Press.

National Association of School Nurses (n.d.). *Integrated service delivery.* (NASN Issue Brief). Scarborough, ME: Author.

Palaich, R., Whitney, T., & Paolino, A. (1991). *Changing delivery systems: Addressing the fragmentation in children and youth services* [Booklet]. Columbia: South Carolina ETV.

Policies and practices for addressing barriers to student learning: Current status and new directions. (1996). *Addressing Barriers to Learning, 1*(4), 1–2.

Smith, R. C., Lincoln, C., & Dodson, D. (1991). *Let's do it our way: Working together for educational excellence* [Booklet]. Columbia: South Carolina ETV.

Ysseldyke, J., et al. (1997). *School psychology: A blueprint for training and practice II.* Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

About the Author

Jackie M. Allen is an education programs consultant with the Student Support Services and Programs unit of the California

Department of Education. She received her doctorate in education at the University of San Francisco in 1990. Her primary research interests are counseling and the special needs student, assessment and accountability of student support services, and counseling and the human brain. The editor of *School Counseling: New Perspectives and Practices*, Allen has also authored numerous articles on counseling and student support services. She is a past president of the American School Counselor Association, has served two terms on the American Counseling Association Governing Council, and has received the California Association of Counseling and Development Clarion Modell Distinguished Service Award.